Committee: North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)

State: Republic of Albania

Agenda Item: Syrian Civil War

The Syrian Civil War started on March 15, 2011, with the influence of peaceful anti-government protests. As a result of the violent intervention of the Assad regime, it grew into a major civil war. This process led to major humanitarian, social and political crises in Syria. After this crisis, which started between the Syrian army, the Syrian government and the internal rebels in Syria, the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, Al Nusra and some Kurdish, Turkmen, Druze and Assyrian groups participated, and recently Russia, Iran, the United States, Turkiye and Israel participated in regular attacks. was included as. The protests, which started on March 15, 2011, spread across the country in April 2011. When we come to the present, towards the end of 2024, the 2nd Battle of Aleppo started in coalition with the Opposition parties such as HTS and SMO, and on December 8, 2024, as a result of the capture of the capital Damascus and Assad leaving the country, the Opposition parties established the Syrian transitional government. Tens of thousands of people died as a result of these wars. In 2012 and 2013, the opposition began to gain the advantage. The opposition had come within a few kilometers of Damascus city center and captured most of Aleppo. In addition, harsh clashes took place in the city center of Homs. In this way, Northern and Eastern Syria are largely out of the hands of the regime. At the end of 2013 and the beginning of 2014, the regime began to advance as the opposition lost external support and started fighting among them. In 2016, the regime and its allies took back many residential areas from the opposition in the Aleppo countryside. Additionally, one of the captured areas is Turkmen Mountain. Thereupon, Türkiye and Saudi Arabia discussed the possibility of a land operation, and this caused international tension between Iran and Russia. When we look at the international situation, we see that many countries and organizations are trying to impose sanctions on President Bashar al-Assad and his administration with the rhetoric of "inflicting oppression on the people". The assets of Bashar al-Assad and his entire circle have been temporarily frozen. Some countries have provided arms aid to opposition groups. Although the UN Security Council convened to decide on sanctions against the Syrian regime, Russia and China, which support the regime, rejected them. No clear decision was taken in the Council, but when Syria shot down Turkiye's F-4 warplane in 2012, NATO gathered and condemned the incident very harshly.

Albania is a small country located in the southeast of the Balkans. Albania joined NATO in April 2009. It did not support a specific political direction in the Syrian civil war and remained passive. However, the chemical attack carried out in the Ghouta region of Damascus in August 2013 caused a great reaction around the world. Following this incident, a series of diplomatic initiatives were launched to destroy Syria's chemical weapons stockpiles. In this process, the UN developed a plan on where and how the chemical substances to be removed from Syria would be destroyed. In this context, Syria agreed to join the Convention on the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (CWC) and it was decided to destroy its chemical weapons stocks under international supervision. While searching for a suitable place for the destruction process, Albania came to the fore as one of the potential hosts of this process in 2013. However, this proposal was subject to widespread public protests in Albania. Concerned about environmental and health risks, the public pressured the government to reject the proposal. The government, which was initially positive about this proposal, gave up after intense protests. As a result, the Albanian government refused to destroy the chemicals in their country. After this, as an alternative solution, the chemicals extracted from Syria were transferred to Italian ports with specially equipped ships, and from there to the US ship MV Cape Ray, and were destroyed in a mobile destruction system on the sea. Although this process was seen as an example of international cooperation, it had many difficulties. Particularly the reaction of the Albanian people revealed the importance of considering environmental and social risks.

The collapse of the Assad regime has affected the balance of power in the Middle East. The end of the regime supported by Russia and Iran has weakened the influence of these countries in the region. As a result of years of conflict, there is a major humanitarian crisis in Syria. Millions of people have been displaced and infrastructure has been largely destroyed. In the new era, international support is needed for the reconstruction of the country and the return of refugees. Even though the situation in the Syrian civil war has calmed down, there is always a threat. To solve this problem, NATO should proceed with a policy of peace, not war. An agreement should be signed with the opposition, regimes and organizations in the country. Refugees who escaped from the country and took refuge in other countries should be allowed to return to Syria. Even though it is difficult, the reconstruction of the social, social and political structure is very important.

Sources/References:

<https://www.britannica.com/place/Albania>

<https://www.britannica.com/event/Syrian-Civil-War>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Syrian_civil_war>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Syrian_civil_war#Humanitarian_impact>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Syrian_civil_war#Background>

<https://www.unicef.org/emergencies/syrian-crisis>

<https://www.institutmontaigne.org/en/publications/syria-end-never-ending-war>

<https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-9381/>